

Visitors' report

Name of education provider	New College Durham
Validating body / Awarding body	Teesside University
Programme name	BA (Hons) Social Work
Mode of delivery	Full time Part time
Relevant part of the HCPC Register	Social worker in England
Date of visit	19 - 20 March 2014

Contents

Executive summary	2
Introduction.....	3
Visit details	3
Sources of evidence	4
Recommended outcome	5
Conditions.....	6

Executive summary

The Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) approve educational programmes in the UK which health and care professionals must complete before they can apply to be registered with us. We are a statutory regulator and our main aim is to protect the public. We currently regulate 16 professions. All of these professions have at least one professional title which is protected by law. This means that anyone using the title 'social worker' in England must be registered with us. The HCPC keep a register of health and care professionals who meet our standards for their training, professional skills, behaviour and health.

The visitors report which follows outlines the recommended outcome made by the visitors on the approval of the programme. This recommended outcome was accepted by the Education and Training Committee (Committee) on 5 June 2014. At the Committee meeting, the programme was approved. This means that the education provider has met the condition(s) outlined in this report and that the programme meets our standards of education and training (SETs) and ensures that those who complete it meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register. The programme is now granted open ended approval, subject to satisfactory monitoring.

Introduction

The HCPC visited the programme at the education provider as the Social Work profession came onto the register in 2012 and a decision was made by the Education and Training Committee to visit all existing programmes from this profession. This visit assessed the programme against the standards of education and training (SETs) and considered whether those who complete the programme meet the standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

This visit was part of a joint event. The professional body considered their accreditation of the programme. The professional body and the HCPC formed a joint panel, with an independent chair and secretary, supplied by the education provider. Whilst the joint panel participated in collaborative scrutiny of the programme and dialogue throughout the visit; this report covers the HCPC's recommendations on the programme only. As an independent regulatory body, the HCPC's recommended outcome is independent and impartial and based solely on the HCPC's standards. A separate report, produced by the professional body outlines their decisions on the programme's status.

Visit details

Name of HCPC visitors and profession	Gary Hickman (Social worker in England) Deborah Kouzarides (Social worker in England)
HCPC executive officer(s) (in attendance)	Hollie Latham
Proposed student numbers	35 per year
Proposed start date of programme approval	September 2014
Chair	Lesley Bryden (New College Durham)
Secretary	Ann Aydon (New College Durham)
Members of the joint panel	Lynn Heath (The College of Social Work) Roseann Connoly (The College of Social Work)

Sources of evidence

Prior to the visit the HCPC reviewed the documentation detailed below, sent by the education provider:

	Yes	No	N/A
Programme specification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Descriptions of the modules	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SETs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mapping document providing evidence of how the education provider has met the SOPs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Practice placement handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student handbook	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Curriculum vitae for relevant staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
External examiners' reports from the last two years	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

During the visit the HCPC saw the following groups or facilities:

	Yes	No	N/A
Senior managers of the education provider with responsibility for resources for the programme	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Programme team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Placements providers and educators / mentors	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialist teaching accommodation (eg specialist laboratories and teaching rooms)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Recommended outcome

To recommend a programme for approval, the visitors must be assured that the programme meets all of the standards of education and training (SETs) and that those who complete the programme meet our standards of proficiency (SOPs) for their part of the Register.

The visitors agreed to recommend to the Education and Training Committee that a number of conditions are set on the programme, all of which must be met before the programme can be approved.

The visitors agreed that 51 of the SETs have been met and that conditions should be set on the remaining six SETs.

Conditions are requirements that the education provider must meet before the programme can be recommended for approval. Conditions are set when certain standards of education and training have not been met or there is insufficient evidence of the standard being met.

The visitors did not make any recommendations for the programme.

Recommendations are observations on the programme or education provider which do not need to be met before the programme is recommended for approval. Recommendations are normally set to encourage further enhancements to the programme and are normally set when it is felt that the particular standard of education and training has been met at, or just above the threshold level.

Conditions

2.1 The admissions procedures must give both the applicant and the education provider the information they require to make an informed choice about whether to take up or make an offer of a place on a programme.

Condition: The education provider must review the information available to potential applicants with particular reference to bursaries and fees.

Reason: In discussion with the students, it was highlighted that students on the programme are very aware of the changes in bursary arrangements for social work students in England. However, there was uncertainty on the number of bursaries available to New College Durham students and how these would be allocated. Students mentioned they had heard possibilities of allocation via means testing, attendance and grades however no progress on a formal decision had been communicated to them. The visitors also heard that current first year students were made aware, upon application, that the current course fees were £6000 per year, however when coming to register were informed that the fees has risen to £7500. Students expressed that the lower fee rate, amongst other areas, had partly informed their choice to study at New College Durham. In addition to this some students mentioned that the fee structure on the New College Durham admissions web page suggested that fees reduced in second year, then again in third year. However, they later understood that this was a statement of the fees paid by current students in their current year of study and was not applicable to new applicants. The visitors consider this to be essential information for applicants and that it could currently be misleading. Therefore, the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation including advertising materials, to ensure that potential applicants are informed and kept up to date regarding the bursary and fee structure. In this way the visitors can determine how the programme can meet this standard by ensuring that applicants have all the information they require in order to make an informed choice about taking up a place on the programme.

3.8 The resources to support student learning in all settings must be effectively used.

Condition: The programme team must revisit programme documentation to ensure the terminology in use is reflective of the current terminology used in relation to statutory regulation and the HCPC.

Reason: The visitors noted the documentation submitted by the education provider contained inaccuracies and incorrect terminology. For example page 58 of the course handbook states that, "Before any student is permitted to go out on their first placement s/he will need to fulfil the HCPC Assessed Readiness for Direct Practise requirements showing that they meet the Professional Capability Framework at the Readiness for Direct Practice level." This is not a requirement of the HCPC and refers to guidelines set by The College of Social Work. It was also noted that the New College Durham web page contained statements which suggested that students would receive automatic registration with the HCPC on successful completion of the programme, for example, "The course will provide successful students with a professional qualification in social work, which will enable them to join the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC)...". In a meeting with the students it was also expressed that students were of the understanding that successful completion of the programme provided automatic registration to the HCPC. It is important for students to understand that successfully

completing the programme will provide eligibility to apply to the HCPC register and not automatic registration. Therefore the visitors require the education provider to review the programme documentation and ensure the terminology used is accurate, and reflects the language associated with statutory regulation and avoids any potential confusion for students.

3.14 Where students participate as service users in practical and clinical teaching, appropriate protocols must be used to obtain their consent.

Condition: The programme team must provide further evidence that where students participate as service users in practical teaching, appropriate protocols are used to obtain their consent.

Reason: The visitors noted through discussions with the students and the programme team that verbal consent was sought for participation as a service user in practical and role play activities. The visitors were provided with a 'Consent and Confidentiality' form that students signed prior to starting the programme, however this did not clearly state any formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students before they participated as a service user in practical teaching. The visitors considered that without consent protocols in place it would be hard to mitigate any risk involved where students participate as service users. The visitors could not determine how students were informed about participating within the programme, how records were maintained to indicate consent had been obtained, or how situations where students declined from participation were managed with alternative learning arrangements so there would be no impact on their learning. The visitors therefore require the programme team to provide evidence of formal protocols for obtaining informed consent from students and for managing situations where students decline from participating in practical teaching or role play.

4.9 When there is interprofessional learning the profession-specific skills and knowledge of each professional group must be adequately addressed.

Condition: The education provider must submit information about the collaborative curriculum for the programme.

Reason: The documentation provided stated that interprofessional learning (IPL) was not applicable to the programme. However in conversation with the programme team the visitors heard conflicting statements on whether IPL was present in the programme. The visitors therefore require clarification on the inclusion of IPL, and if this is present require information about which parts of the curriculum are shared, and which are not, with the reasons behind this. This is to ensure that where IPL is present it does not prevent students from learning the skills and knowledge specific to social work.

6.9 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the Register.

Condition: The education provider must submit further evidence that assessment regulations clearly specify requirements for an aegrotat award not to provide eligibility for admission to the HCPC Register.

Reason: The visitors were provided with documentation noting information about aegrotat awards, however the visitors could not identify where it is clearly stated that

aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. The visitors were also unclear as to how this information is clearly communicated to students. The visitors therefore require further evidence to demonstrate where in the programme documentation it is clearly stated that aegrotat awards do not provide eligibility to apply to the Register. In this way the visitors can be sure that this information is available to students and that this standard is met.

6.11 Assessment regulations must clearly specify requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner who must be appropriately experienced and qualified and, unless other arrangements are agreed, be from the relevant part of the Register.

Condition: The education provider must revise the assessment regulations to clearly articulate the requirements for the appointment of at least one external examiner to be from the relevant part of the HCPC Register, unless other arrangements are agreed with the HCPC.

Reason: In the documentation submitted by the education provider there was insufficient detail concerning the recruitment of external examiners to the programme. The visitors were happy that the current external examiners meet the requirement of the HCPC. However, this standard requires that the assessment regulations of the programme state that any external examiner appointed to the programme needs to be appropriately registered, or that suitable alternative arrangements should be agreed. Therefore the visitors require evidence that HCPC requirements regarding the appointment of external examiners to the programme are included in the assessment regulations, to ensure that this standard is met.

Deborah Kouzarides
Gary Hickman